

# HARPSDEN PARISH NEWS

## APRIL 2020



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# MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR

Dear friends

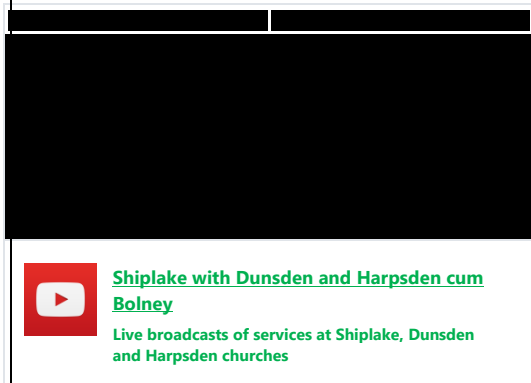
As you, hopefully, know we are currently live streaming our services as we are now not allowed to enter our church buildings, and we all need to stay inside as much as possible.

In order to watch the services please look on our Facebook page:  
[The united benefice of Shiplake, Dunsden and Harpsden](#)



Or our YouTube studio!

[Shiplake with Dunsden and Harpsden cum Bolney](#)



There you will find links to the various services that we are offering, along with links to the orders of service so that you can join in with the words.

If you would like to volunteer to do a reading, or lead prayers at one of our services then please do contact me and I will pop you onto our rota.

Please do feel free to contact me if I can help in any way during this difficult time.

With all God's Blessings

Robert



## **Mothering Sunday 2020 – Sermon** by Rev<sup>d</sup> Sarah Nesbitt

(adapted from the sermon delivered on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, live streamed from Shiplake, available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5c41j9rhNzPhORRKGf3BHQ> )

Readings: 1 Samuel 1:20-end

Colossians 3:12-17

Luke 2:33-35

*Holy Spirit, take my words and speak to each of us according to our need.*

So here we are on Mothering Sunday 2020, not one we will forget in a hurry. Thank you for being with us.

Mothering Sunday began to be celebrated in the Middle Ages and was a day when people took time to travel to the Mother Church of their area or Diocese, which would often have been the cathedral. So how appropriate it is that today, when many people are unable to travel to any church because of the COVID-19 situation, that our own cathedral church, Christ Church, is live-streaming its very first Mothering Sunday service. You can see this here:

<https://www.facebook.com/diocesefoxford/videos/246200659897959/>

Mothering Sunday has since become a time to reflect on the Motherhood of God, the example of Mary the mother of our Lord and on thanksgiving for those who have mothered us. The verb 'to mother' means to treat someone with great care and affection, to nurture, protect, tend.

Our Old Testament reading today might sound somewhat painful. A mother, Hannah, dedicates her longed-for son into the service of God. Behind her joy of receiving a child lie many years of childlessness, reflecting some of the complex feelings that Mothering Sunday may provoke in those who long for their own children.

In our Gospel reading from Luke, which follows on from the Nunc Dimittis, Simeon's prayer of thanksgiving to God for bringing the Christ child to him, Simeon offers Mary a prophecy of pain 'and a sword will pierce you own soul too'.

Both narratives highlight the challenges facing parents and children and those longing to be parents, or for whom childhood was not a happy time. How often do we help people to be honest about these challenges? Do we encourage people to keep up appearances, to hide their difficulties behind facades?

These stories illustrate the cost of love; if we didn't care, it wouldn't hurt. The gospel narratives tell of the reality of Mary's faithful obedience, something we are asked to nurture, that faithful, costly obedience to God's call. They call us to be a community of nurture and mutual care, doing God's will in our own families and communities.

Some of us will be struggling to care for those we love in this time of physical distancing and isolation. Yes, we have technology solutions: Facebook, Zoom, Teams, Duo, Messenger, WhatsApp...but none of these will replace the physical presence of the people we love and enjoy spending time with. And what about those with whom we are confined for the coming weeks?

Christine Sine, creator and founder of the online blog 'Godspace'<sup>1</sup> writes some suggestions for this time, for those who are currently cooped up with someone you love.

- Make room for one another
- Take time for each other
- Pray and read scripture together
- Learn something new
- Have fun together

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<sup>1</sup> <https://godspacelight.com/2020/03/18/strengthening-family-bonds-in-a-time-of-social-distancing/>

For those we love but can't be with physically, she recommends that we:

- Help them to know they are loved and that you're thinking of them
- Text, phone, message
- Write a letter
- Send them books to read – and then discuss them together over the phone

This is a time when we also need to learn how to accept help from others. Fierce independence is fine, but the gift of receiving is as important as that of giving and is satisfying for both parties. I had to rely on a friend to get some fresh vegetables yesterday, because there hadn't been any in our local shops for several days. She happened to be at a farm shop, so bought some and dropped them in a bag outside my front door for me. Ask for help when you need it. God might hear our prayers, but your neighbours can't.

Look outside! Spring is stunning. In this time of slowing down, listen to the birds, audible now as there is less traffic. Watch spring unfold, get ready for our Creator's show. The overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God,<sup>2</sup> on show for all of us to see. Our gift from God. Let us receive it with joy.

What does God ask of us? From Paul's letter to the Colossians: to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience; forgive one another; clothe ourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony; be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, give thanks to God the Father through him.

So on this day, Mothering Sunday, when we are thinking about nurture and care of self and of others, let us clothe ourselves as the flowers. Consider the lilies of the field – even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these (Matthew 6:28-29).

Here, we have a selection of flowers, a virtual bouquet for you. We have asters for patience and wisdom; a pale pink rose for kindness; freesia for thoughtfulness; Alstromeria for friendship; blue iris for faith; a daisy – well, the nearest I could get to a daisy at this time of the



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6SSHuZvQE>

year, a Gerbera (which itself symbolises cheerfulness, something we need right now!) – for hope; and tulips for love, lots of them. If we take a little time to clothe ourselves as the flowers, it might help the coming weeks to be a little easier.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...and be thankful.

Thankful for what we have.

Thankful to be able to be in touch with others.

Thankful for spring, bursting forth around us.

Thankful for those offering care and support.

Thankful to our Lord for his compassion, his love, his mothering.

Let us take this time of change to slow down, pray, be with our Lord in prayer, know His presence with us. He won't be self-isolating! He is here, with us, always. Praise the Lord!

Amen.

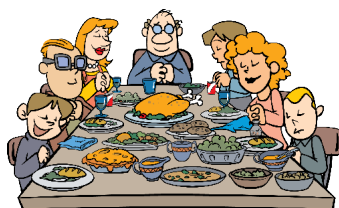


## **WEEKLY PRAYER GROUP**

**The Tuesday Prayer Group is unable to meet at the moment, but if you would like someone held in prayer please contact**

**Pat Needham (01491 576961)**

## **FELLOWSHIP LUNCH**



**Fellowship lunches will return once we are out of Lockdown!**



# **SPONSORSHIP OF THE SANCTUARY CANDLE**

**The book for sponsoring the sanctuary candle for 2020 is at the back of the church. Please see Pat Needham for payment.**

## *Editor's Note*

A rather strange magazine this month. Apologies for the black rectangles on Robert's introduction. He has just copied and pasted the links to Facebook etc and neither he nor I know how to remove the rectangles. I hope you enjoyed reading Sarah's sermon from Mothering Sunday. Stay indoors, stay safe. I'm still venturing out to the shops, so if anyone needs any shopping/prescriptions etc, do please call me – my number is below.

**Sue Wright**

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as above

*Harpsden Parish News is written for and by the people of this parish, and contributions are always welcome. However, the views expressed therein are those of the writers and are not necessarily shared by the Rector, the Editor and Churchwarden.*



**davis tate**

ALL PROPERTY MATTERS

# Happy New Year, Happy New Home?

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Invitation

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